

Raised House Bill 6391

An Act Concerning Penalties For Certain Driving Under The Influence Offenses, Offender Risk Reduction, earned Credits and Home Confinement for Certain Nonviolent Drug Offenders

Testimony of Kimberly Sundquist

March 14, 2011

Distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Kimberly Sundquist and I would like to testify in opposition of some parts of HB 6391, in particular section 4. I am the former president for Survivors of Homicide, a position I held from 2005 until 2008 following the tragic murder of my uncle Jerry Timmons Barnette on September 11, 2003. My testimony contains my own words and are not to be construed as a collective opinion of all crime victims.

I am most certainly appalled that anyone would want to let criminals out "On Good Behavior". Wasn't it their bad behavior that got them to where they are in the first place? You will jeopardize our entire criminal "injustice" system and put Connecticut residents at risk. My uncle was killed by a repeat offender...someone who obviously never learned his lesson in prison. The prison doors are already a revolving door for inmates and if you let them out before they are ready, then you are asking for even more trouble.

When a crime victim has been traumatized and violated, they have nothing left except for our quest for justice. What message will you be sending to us if you tell us an offender is sentenced to 30 years but he is getting out early because he behaved. I don't care how he behaved in jail...I care about how he behaves in the general population. We are the victims and are continually seeing offenders get more rights than us. The scales of justice are no longer balanced. The root of the word "Judiciary" is justice. Please start living up to the job you have been given which is to determine the best way to see that justice is served and to be the voice of the people who voted for you. I don't know any citizen who would want an ex-convict in their back yard, so unless you are willing to build them a tent in yours, don't send them out to my neck of the woods.

I understand people deserve second chances, but some of the people you are going to want to let out have had second, third and fourth chances or more. Joshua Komisarjevsky himself had 27 felony convictions prior to the July 2007 home invasion of the Petit family. If you pass this portion of this bill, and there is a similar case that shocks the world as did the Petit case, don't be shaking your heads and wonder how something like that could happen. Don't point fingers at other agencies. The blood will be on your hands because your bill allowed them to walk out and commit the crime.

Another example to show you how absurd this portion of the bill is resides in Rhode Island. Michael Woodmansee kidnapped and stabbed a 5 year old boy in 1975. That boy would be a year older than I am. After he murdered the child, he cannibalized him and cleaned the bones before he lacquered them and kept them as a trophy on his dresser for seven years until he was eventually caught because he tried to strangle another boy. This man was sentenced to 40 years...a sentence I feel is entirely too short for a crime of this nature. Unfortunately this man is eligible to be released after a mere 28 years because of good behavior pending a psychiatric exam. Do you think that is acceptable? This man took a 5 year old child, killed him and ate him and he is only going to server 28 years? I know he will kill again and it is unlikely he will continue to reside in Rhode Island. He may come to live in a neighboring state, like Connecticut since we are soft of criminals too here. This case disgusts me and it should disgust you too. This shows you that time off for good behavior is not acceptable.

If you want to save money, I urge you to stop the abuse criminals and public defenders are allowed to commit with countless appeals. Putting a statute of limitations on post-conviction appeals is the easiest and best way for the state to save while not putting the public at risk and telling crime victims that their ordeal doesn't really matter to you. Thus far, I have seen for myself the broken promises of the injustice system in my case and those cases of people I have worked with. We are sick of it. We are standing up. Enough is enough. Please bring justice back.

I thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

~Kimberly Sundquist